1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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which make up the *efu*. The Nupe house consists of a number of huts, mostly round, built of clay and thatched with grass, which are surrounded by a high mud wall. The wall opens upon the path or open space in front of the house in the *katamba*, a hut more spacious than the rest, with big doors which make the *katamba* a gateway or entrance-hall of the compound. Inside the house are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba*, all invisible from outside. You only see the tops of the grass roofs protruding from behind the compound wall. Sometimes the house of a chief is built in a different, more imposing style with a large square or semicircular *katamba* which has a high gabled roof and windows let into the walls. Often huts or entrance-halls are decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Some houses are more beautifully decorated than others—a sign both of difference in prosperity and in ambition or aesthetic leanings. There are the signs of occupational specialization: one or two blacksmiths' furnaces; a house decorated with crude plastics in relief of animals, or with a pair of horns surmounting the roof—a hunter's place; a platform of dyeing pits in one corner of the village, and perhaps the half-open sheds of the weavers. To-day one small mosque at least is found in every village of Nupe. Pagan sacred shrines or sacrifice places are mostly hidden inside the houses; only in the riverain villages did I find a sacred shrine placed in the open, in the middle of the village. The sacred groves where the annual sacrifices are performed are always some distance away from the village, hidden in the thin bush and brushwood which surround the village. Most villages are situated near a watercourse, be it only a little stream or brook. From here the women fetch the water, and here you may see them at all hours of the day washing dishes and calabashes or laundering their clothes. There are also wells in most of the villages, well-dug deep wells—the Nupe are excellent well-builders—with a strong timber framework and a solid, clean platform round the mouth of the shaft; standing on the platform, the women draw water in buckets or earthenware pots tied to long ropes of native hemp. The big, round roasting-ovens of clay which look like huge red eggs scattered on the outside of the village, and in the bigger places the square of open booths which forms the market, complete the picture of the Nupe village. Once or twice a week this square is overflowing with people, men and women of all ages: they buy and sell, they listen or dance to the music of drummers and flute-players, they have their heads shaved, they talk, chat, cry out their wares. They are a mixed crowd, and the nearer the village is to the main roads of the country, the more mixed it is: people from the village, peasants from the *tunga* near-by, traders from Bida, travellers and occasional visitors from places and countries far away.

The market gathering is not the village community. Yet the boundary of what we have called the area of common life is, of necessity, fluid. It is redrafted and reset with every new bond of contact and every new channel of communication. But we may say this: the village and its dependencies form the core of this area of common life. Between them takes place the intensive life of the community, of regular and habitual co-operation in all spheres of life. Within this area marriages are arranged,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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361 It is a little over a mile from the west gate to the centre of Bida where the four main roads meet. Here stands another royal residence, the house of *Etsu* Usman Zaki—to-day almost in ruins. But the ruins, the enormous lay-out, the faded paintings and decorations, still speak of the ancient greatness. It is only ten years since the last ruler from this house, *Etsu* Bello, died. But ten years in this country, ten years with no royal household, no army of servants and slaves to take care of upkeep and repair, have sufficed to turn the king's palace into a desolate, half-deserted ruin in a corner of which the king's last descendants find ample room. Behind the house of Usman Zaki is the big town mosque where the Friday services are held, a building of red clay, with a tin roof perched on top, bare and singularly unattractive. In front, and all along the north wall of the royal residence, filling the wide open square, stretches the big 'night-market'—the centre of Bida's pulsating life. It starts in the late afternoon, when peasants return from the farms, craftsmen stop work, and the women leave the houses, dressed for the occasion. Soon the large square is packed with people: men, women, children; townspeople and villagers, buyers and sellers, and those who come to the evening market to watch the crowds, meet friends, or to enjoy the excitement that goes with such public gatherings. The market is easy to survey. Every important commodity has its proper place. Horses and live stock, saddlery and fine coloured grass mats are sold behind the mosque; leather work, caps and straw hats, timber for roofing and coarse mats, in front of *Etsu* Usman's house. The butchers have a hut of their own, and so have the barbers, while traders and brokers who deal in cloth, gowns, ornaments, and swords occupy the long rows of booths which form the one rigid structure in this moving, seething multitude. Women are sitting in long rows all along the street, so close to each other that you can hardly move, selling food, native soap, kola-nuts, ornaments, silver bangles and glassware, beads and European cloth—anything that can be bought and sold in West Africa. Sometimes there are drummers, or a group of girls will sing and dance somewhere in the crowd; the 'young men about town' walk up and down the street, shouting greetings to friends, and joking with girls. When it becomes dark the big trade ends; only the women continue their trade in the light of little clay lamps which they place in front of them—a truly enchanting illumination.

548 But then, in the dark of the night, the market changes its face: the respectable meeting-place of buyers and sellers becomes a market of Venus Pandemos. The women who remain so late are not dressed for work or trade: they wear their most beautiful dresses, light-coloured and embroidered cloth; they have bangles on their wrists and rings on their fingers; their eyes are painted with antimony, and their fingers and hands stained with henna. They never carry loads themselves—they always have a small girl with them to carry their baskets and bundles. They all sell kola-nuts—a man's article. They are always surrounded by men with whom they gossip and joke, and then, a whispered appointment, one of the men leaves, followed after a while by his companion for the night. One light after the other is extinguished. The market grows

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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30. The Nupe quarter in Lagos

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31. The oldest mosque in Bida

[p. 230(B)]

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *ezi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

To-day there is at least one small mosque in every Nupe settlement except in the riverain villages, while pagan shrines are concealed in the houses. All settlements have good wells and round roasting-ovens of red clay. A square of open booths forms the market. To the west of every village is an open space (*finzo*) where corn is threshed.

An *ezi* usually has several *tunga* settlements or hamlets; Kutigi, for example, has six, founded between 1860 and 1910. The *tunga* are much smaller " daughter settlements " or " colonies " of the *ezi*. They seldom consist of more than three family groups (*emi*—see p. 31 above); they are less permanent than the " real " village, and lack the religious and ancestral bonds which tie a village to its locality. They have no separate markets or age-sets. *Tunga* settlements have been formed by groups moving out into the bush in search of new farmland; they are always referred to as the *tunga* of a certain *ezi* and rarely, if ever, develop into villages themselves. Close contact, intermarriage, and new emigration link a *tunga* with its *ezi*.

The ward (*efu*) is a sector of a large village or town and is made up of a number of compounds; except in some riverside villages they are often separated from each other by stretches of open land or cultivated fields studded with clumps of trees. Each *efu* has its own name, derived from a topographical peculiarity or a sociological feature, or from the origin of the inhabitants. The number of *efu* in an *ezi* varies; the old city of Bida had four, Doko has five.

The walled compound or " house " (*emi*), already mentioned with reference to its occupants, consists of a number of huts, mostly round, with very thin walls of clay and grass-thatched roofs. The high mud wall surrounding the *emi* opens upon a path or open space where there is a gateway or entrance hall to the compound, consisting of a larger hut known as *katamba*. The *katamba* is used as a meeting place for the men, as a guest house for strangers, or for the carrying out of part-time industries such as mat- or net-making. Within the *emi* are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba* invisible from the outside. A chief sometimes has a larger and more imposing *katamba* with a high gabled roof and windows. Huts and entrance hall are often decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Signs of occupational specialization, such as a blacksmith's furnace, are sometimes found. A man and each of his wives has a separate hut.

Granaries (*edo*) which stand among the living-huts in the compound, are egg-shaped, raised off the ground, about 7 ft. high and 4 ft. in diameter, with thick clay walls and a grass roof. The opening is about halfway up one side and has a clay lid. There are also cylindrical ovens, 5 ft. high and 3 ft. wide, for drying bulrush millet and shea-nuts, and for making soap, outside the compound. These are communal property, owned by the women.

The Political System[3]

The political organization of the Nupe is centralized under the *Etsu* Nupe, who is the highest title-holder in a nobility graded by precedence but within which there is provision for promotion. Little is known of the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times, though some features from the ancient Nupe system doubtless survive in the original Nupe dynasty at Patigi. In former times there were ritual taboos in conformity with which the *Etsu* wore only white, ate food prepared only by his wives, and might not be seen eating by any stranger. The *ndakó gboyá* cult[4] for

[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 87–91.
[4] See below, pp. 48–9.